

Northants Hash House Harriers

Sun 13/Jul/08

Run: 1502

Headley Park

Hares: **Surrey H3**

A large gathering of mixed hashers milled around at the splendid venue of Headley Park, formerly the Lithuanian Club – and no, I don't know whether it actually had anything to do with Lithuania. **Growler** arrived in good time for once, but if she had taken a little more time before leaving home, she might have turned up in a pair of matching hashing shoes, not two odd ones!

I'm not at all sure who made the decision to abandon the previously arranged NH4 run in Aldershot in favour of a joint trail with Surrey, but judging by numerous comments around the trail, many NH4-ers felt it was perhaps regrettable. Surrey's different trail marking protocols caused much confusion (even to them, in many cases), and by the end of a very lengthy trail, most were glad to get back to the start.

Be that as it may, we all set off in good heart, in anticipation of a splendid little jaunt through the beautiful surrounding countryside. **Old Thumper** showed her leadership qualities at an early stage, declining the use of a perfectly good footbridge to wade the stream instead. Early woodland paths offered plenty of shiggy, and in the dappled sunlight it was all very scenic. The trail went across many lush and verdant pastures, many hashers displaying their ignorance of the Country Code by climbing gates at the latch end rather than by the hinges. **Sugar Plum Fairy** was looking distinctly under the weather consequent upon his over indulgence the previous evening – not at all his usual chirpy self – a relief to others, also suffering the excesses of the 1500th run celebrations. The trail arrived in the centre of Dockenfield, where the many delightful cottages were admired, and an inconclusively marked false trail caused great confusion, and took a long time to solve – as did many of the others which followed.

His Knees Are Bugged was sporting his hiking poles, ostensibly as an aid to mobility, but he was making such good progress that the poles were largely redundant, being utilised instead in spearing the opposition and those seeking to overtake him. A drinks stop just before Frensham Church included a lengthy false which suckered $\frac{3}{4}$ of the pack in the wrong direction, and after more scenic woods and dappled sunshine, we arrived back in Dockenfield where $\frac{2}{3}$ of the pack seemed hell bent on embarking on another loop. Soon a second drinks stop was reached, being dispensed from the back of a re-cycled ambulance, and **Growler** was visibly revived with the liberal internal application of gin & tonic. **Old Thumper** had several, and retained a couple to carry round with her for the rest of the trail. **Popeye** convinced no-one but himself that a false trail would not go back past a drinks stop (it did), so he went off in entirely the wrong direction - so no change there, then.

Sense of humour failures were setting in with many when we finally hauled our aching legs and bodies back into the car park at 2 hours 10 minutes. **Silvier Fox** tried to persuade us (largely unsuccessfully) that he got back $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour ago, having been on trail all the way round. A few disputed that there had actually been a trail all the way round.

In summary, an excellent trail was rather spoiled by too much blacktop, and although the countryside was beautiful, after more than two hours, there was rather too much of that, too! I was unable to stay for the Circle, so am unable to report on the Down-downs.

On-On Love 'n' stuff,

Bidet